

## io            The New Culture and Tradition.

science, philosophy, even theology, felt, as time went on, the impression of the new impulse towards rationality, humanity, towards freedom of enjoyment and recreation. A change passes over the spirit of the age. It becomes more pagan, but at the same time more human. It feels itself expansive, responsive, and leaps with a truly pristine exultation out of the narrow, painful groove of the Middle Ages into a new path of freedom and enjoyment

The new movement in literature, though antagonistic to scholasticism, was, however, not necessarily hostile to the Church. Petrarch, the father of humanism, was an orthodox churchman, and his criticism was reserved for the scholastic pedantry which did duty for education, and for astrology and quackery which passed for science. Many of his distinguished literary progeny held ecclesiastical offices, and by-and-bye some of the highest dignitaries of the Church were enthusiastic humanists. But the conception, the spirit of the new learning were radically different from those of mediaeval tradition, and were bound ere long to induce a reaction dangerous to the sway of tradition in church as well as school. The free cultivation and exercise of the intellect was incompatible with the unreserved acceptance of an authoritative system in theology and philosophy. The study of Virgil, or Cicero, or Seneca, of Homer, or Plato might not make the student a sceptic. The modern civilised world is not sceptical, despite all the changes wrought by Renaissance, Reformation, Revolution. The intellectual temper nurtured by such study, however, might easily, and did, revolt against the dogmas and sophistries that only the neglect of rational culture had made possible. It made for enlightenment. It roused the critical spirit. It brought man back to the knowledge of himself as a rational being. It nurtured the desire, the striving, for liberty of self-development. "The history of the Renaissance," to quote Mr Symonds again, "is the history of the attainment of self-conscious freedom by the human spirit manifested in the European races," If man occasionally felt the impulse to such freedom in the Middle Ages, he was taught to suppress it or to harmonise it with the dominant system. \*With the advent of a larger culture this was difficult, and finally became impossible. Men might respect the traditional